

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
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COUNTRY USSR  
SUBJECT Construction of New Merchant Ships in the USSR

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1. An article, "New Tankers Pass Trial Test", appeared in "Pravda" of 24 Dec 53, issue No 358. The article reports as follows: Trial runs of a new tanker named "LENINGRAD" build by Soviet shipbuilders in a short time, were carried on during 21, 22 and 23 Dec 53. The trial tests revealed the superior qualities of the newly-constructed ship. Its tanks hold more than ten thousand tons of fuel and require two hours to load. The main engines are internal-combustion. that these Diesels will develop at least three thousand horsepower, which will give the ship a speed of at least 11 mph when loaded. The article indicated further that the tanker is fitted with modern fire-fighting equipment. the fire-fighting installation is equipped with a carbon dioxide fire-prevention station, such as is most prevalent on Soviet tankers. All members of the crew have been provided with individual cabins and all comforts necessary for long voyages.
2. The construction of the tanker was carried on with highspeed methods. The hull was assembled in large sections. The superstructure weighing 150 tons was loaded on the ship pre-assembled. Automatic and semi-automatic welding methods used in the construction of the tanker permitted a four-to-tenfold increase in the productivity of welders.
3. At the same time "LENINGRAD" was being tested, another ship of the same type named "KLAIPEDA" was launched. Thus we know that the oil tanker fleet of the USSR has been supplemented by two tankers propelled by Diesel engines, namely: (a) "LENINGRAD", (b) "KLAIPEDA".
4. these tankers will be delivered to the Black Sea Oil Tanker Steamship Company, one of three such lines, the others being "Kasptanker" and "Reydtanker". is based on the following:

(a) "Sovtanker" has five or six large tonnage tankers which were constructed approximately twenty years ago during the first five-year plan. The remaining tankers, approximately 20-22 units, are mainly ships of small carrying capacity. During the

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same period the volume of petroleum carried by "Sovtanker" increased with each year. Besides that, every year one of the large tankers is used to support the whaling expedition which operates in the South Antarctic and thus plays practically no part in Black Sea petroleum shipments.

- (b) The Caspian Oil Tanker Steamship Company "Kasptanker" has more than enough capacity for the amount of petroleum it handles.
  - (c) The Astrakhan Oil Tanker Steamship Company "Reydtanker", because of navigation conditions in the Volga-Caspian Canal and in the northern part of the Caspian Sea, cannot use large tankers in those waters where channel depths are limited to 10-14 feet. Large tonnage tankers when loaded draw at least 20-22 feet. Besides that, "Reydtanker" already has more than adequate tonnage.
  - (d) The remaining marine steamship companies carry on an insignificant volume of petroleum shipments and have a tanker fleet which is completely adequate for this purpose.
5. All indications give one a basis to assume that the "LENINGRAD" and "KLAIPEDA" will be delivered to "Sovtanker".

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